

November 8, 2022

Honorable Stephen R. Clark
United States District Court
Eastern District of Missouri
111 S. 10th Street Suite 14.148
St. Louis, MO 63102

In re: *United States vs. James Isaac Crabtree*

Dear Honorable Judge Clark:

Enclosed please find a series of letters generated by family and friends of the above-referenced individual for your review and consideration at sentencing.

I appreciate your attention in this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,


John M. Lynch

JML:can

Enclosures

CC: Hal Goldsmith

Assistant United States Attorney

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November 8, 2022

Honorable Stephen R. Clark
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri

Re: Isaac Crabtree

Dear Judge Clark:

Isaac Crabtree is my friend.

I first met Isaac when he got the municipal prosecutor job in Jefferson County, Missouri where I practice. We became fast friends, discussing literature and the intricacies of various religions. Isaac is extremely intelligent and knowledgeable, especially about the former. His recall and understanding of these topics impressed me considerably.

I have always considered myself a very good judge of character. When news broke of Isaac Crabtree's charges, I wondered how it was possible that I completely missed the mark with him. Over the last several months, I have struggled with this.

I have given considerable thought to my struggle as well as concern over Isaac and his family's well-being.

Over time, I have become certain that I did not miss the mark when judging Isaac to be a man of good character. Isaac is a generous, devoted and loving Father. He is a brilliant young man. Despite him being in front of you for sentencing on these charges, I maintain that Isaac is a man of the highest moral character who fell from Grace.

I hope that Isaac continues to devote all of his time and energies to restoring the trust of his wife and children. I know that is what matters to him most.

Thanking you for considering my thoughts, I remain,

Respectfully,

THE LOWRY LAW FIRM

Michael D. Lowry
Attorney At Law

Dear Judge Clark,

My name is Nicole Steineger and I am a close friend of Isaac and Arlie Crabtree. My husband Joseph and I became acquainted with the Crabtree family in 2014 at church where I was one of their children's Sunday school teachers. Through the years, we have become like family even spending holidays together. I am also the godmother to their youngest daughter and we continue to attend the same church. I speak with Arlie quite frequently and consider her to be one of my best friends. I love Isaac and Arlie both dearly. It is with this in mind that I write this letter.

As one can imagine, these types of things impact close friends differently than perhaps hearing this type of information regarding acquaintances. There is of course an understandable amount of sadness and disappointment at what has transpired, however, I would like to speak to who I believe Isaac is.

There are complex dynamics to circumstances that are as unique as there are individuals on this planet. Seeing some of the news coverage of what transpired with Isaac, I do believe that the complexity of the matter is not fully being taken into consideration by the media. My view, while most likely unpopular in the era of the me too movement, is that cunning women often have their way with men in powerful positions. I have seen this firsthand on more than one occasion. I try to suspend judgment, but it could be the case that this woman was incentivized to write a certain narrative so as to appear as a victim. For the purpose of this letter, how I may view her is neither here nor there, however, given my view, I believe Isaac has been punished enough. He has been stripped of his job, one that he worked extremely hard for. He has been publicly humiliated by the salacious media coverage of which will remain on the internet for who knows how long. His wife has had to enter the workforce, earning money for their family while he has essentially been on house arrest all while having just given birth to her fifth child. The public disgrace is more than enough burden to carry for the rest of one's lifetime. Many in our society are guilty of the same types of indiscretions, but never have to face such public scorn. That alone is punishment enough.

I find it absolutely unfathomable that Isaac would have to also endure being removed from his family. Arlie knows everything surrounding this indiscretion and is standing by him. His children are the most darling, articulate, intelligent children you will ever encounter. Isaac adores his children and provides a safe and nurturing home for them. Their children are so dear to our family and our community. I fear that removing Isaac from the home would do unspeakable damage and trauma to the children for years to come. Their home is a stable and loving environment. They spend time together as a family doing wonderful and enriching things. This is a family that truly spends time together. There are no substance abuses or unstable situations in this house. There are routines and structure in the home. The children are secure and are bonded to both of their parents. This reflects in how outstanding they are in public and how well they relate to their peers while also having the ability to engage with adults. The children are always respectful and very kind. They are a reflection of the upbringing Isaac and Arlie have given them. My heart breaks at the thought of a disruption such as this to the bliss that is their childhood.

I will leave with this, Isaac knows what he did was wrong. The sorrow and humility he has displayed to his wife and our church are worth noting. I believe that a true measure of one's character is what one makes of one's repentance. From what I have seen, this man has been broken, humbled and is seeking to repair the damage he has done to his wife first and to God, who sees and knows all things. Please consider all that I have said and have mercy on Isaac. The hardship his family would face without him is nearly unbearable as there are so many children that must be cared for. He is a good man.

Sincerely,
Nicole Steineger

To the Honorable Judge,

My name is Mark Emmett Atkins, and I write to you today on behalf of my dear friend James Isaac Crabtree. I live in House Springs, MO where I have resided since 2014, and I work as an assembly operator at a factory in Fenton, MO. It has been my privilege to have James as a close friend since my youth, when we grew up together in Charleston, WV. I, however, know him by his middle name Isaac, along with most of his friends and loved ones, and so it is that name that I would wish to use in speaking of him here. I have known Isaac for close to 30 years now, and the greater part of my life has included him and his whole family. Isaac's parents have known me since we were children, and now his own children know me as Uncle Mark, because he and I have always been like brothers to one another. So, when I speak of my friend and my brother Isaac, I speak of someone whom I love and respect very dearly, and I desire to see that he and his family are healthy, happy, and whole.

Isaac is a man who sincerely desires to do good and who has struggled in his life to live accordingly. He takes his responsibilities and the character of his inner life very seriously, and in spite of any recent personal failings in that regard, it is my firm and unwavering belief that the nature of his life cannot and should not be defined by a moment of shame. But rather, I believe that Isaac's life can best be defined by his relationships with others, and the book of his good deeds. I myself, on numerous occasions, have been the recipient of Isaac's charitable love and concern. He has been a blessing in my life more times than I can recall. His home and his hospitality have always been open to me, and he has been a rock of support for me in some very difficult times that have struck in the course of my own life. And I have always tried to reciprocate that same love with whatever help or support I could, because I know that he and his household deserve even more than I could ever hope to give.

Isaac's generosity and hospitality go beyond merely that of his close friends and loved ones. Over the years, I have personally observed his efforts to help people whom he has met who had needs, both material and immaterial. Whether it was providing assistance (at times anonymous) to the poor and the elderly both in our church as well as people in the broader community, or simply speaking words of comfort to those going through difficulties and experiencing sorrow. Isaac's instincts over the years have tended to be community-building in nature, which is why his house and his family have opened their doors to many people over the years, and why they are so beloved by those who have come to know him. This favorable opinion of Isaac as a person has not changed through all of this, and I do feel that his remorse and repentance have served as a poignant reminder to those who know him that we all need to examine ourselves more closely and be grateful for what we have. I know that I certainly feel this way, as well as many others whom I have spoken with since this incident became public knowledge. And more importantly, I know that Isaac feels this way.

Isaac's love for his family is strong, as he has always tried to provide them with as much as he could. In the midst now of all this sadness and uncertainty, he has sought to return to his first duty as a father, to spend time with his children as much as possible, not knowing what will happen next, and to prepare for the future. This is why he has been so focused on retooling his education and job training to be able to provide for them when he can. I hope that he can do so very soon.

And so, it is my earnest hope that whatever the court should deem fair and just in its sentencing, that Isaac would be granted a measure of leniency that will allow him to continue to be there for his family, and to spare them the pain of his absence. Additionally, it is my hope that he will be able to continue the education and job training that he has only just begun, so that when he is able to return to the job market, he will be well-equipped to once more be the household provider that he has always been. I could say so much more, and indeed I would be willing to do so in person if the court should so desire it, but I hope that this small word spoken from a friend will suffice for your consideration. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mark Emmett Atkins

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mark Atkins". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the printed name.

Father Matthew Williams

169 Franklin Dr #841
Blountville, TN 37617

276-299-0212
frmatthew@sainttikhonroc.org

October 1, 2022

RE: James Isaac Crabtree

To Whom it May Concern:

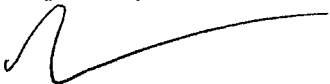
I am the priest and pastor of Saint Tikhon Russian Orthodox Church in Blountville, Tennessee. I served as a deacon at Saint John Chrysostom Russian Orthodox Church from 2004 until 2010. It was during this time that I became acquainted with James Isaac Crabtree and his wife Arlie. We have kept in touch since I moved away from Missouri in 2010. In 2019, Isaac and Arlie invited me back to St Louis to participate in the baptism of their son.

Over the course of our 18 year acquaintance, I have been impressed above all else by Isaac's devotion to his family. Although much of our conversation has been on religious and spiritual matters, we have at times touched on matters of education and career – matters that first and foremost are of importance to him in connection with the wellbeing of his wife and children. I have heard similar observations from others within the Orthodox community who are acquainted with him.

When Isaac contacted me in March of this year regarding the federal investigation into his misconduct in the role as Prosecuting Attorney for Jefferson County, Missouri, his first concern was clearly for the devastating impact his poor judgment and moral failure would have on his wife and children. This concern for his family's well being has been constantly present in the many conversations we have had over the course of this year. Conversations with his wife, Arlie, also make it clear that he has taken responsibility for his mistakes and has a strong desire to work towards healing his relationship with her, being present as a father to his children, and providing for the material and emotional needs of his wife and children.

In closing, I humbly suggest that, in sentencing, Isaac's love for and responsibilities towards his family be weighed in contrast to the seemingly isolated error in judgment that precipitated his investigation and conviction. Further, I hope that whatever sentence the Court may find appropriate will allow Isaac the ability to continue to financially support his wife and children.

Respectfully,



Archpriest Matthew Williams
Saint Tikhon Russian Orthodox Church
Blountville, Tennessee

October 16, 2022

To whom it may concern:

I'm writing this letter at the request of Isaac Crabtree, with regards to current legal proceedings against him. I apologize for possibly inadequate grammar or unclear writing as English is not my native language. Otherwise I will try to be as accurate as possible in relevant facts and my assessments thereof.

I live in Ballwin, Missouri, with my two children and wife. I am a researcher in the rank of Assistant Professor of Radiology at Washington University in St. Louis, specializing in mathematical methods in medical research. I know Isaac and his family from attending St John Chrysostom Orthodox Church since 2007 until its tentative closure in 2018, and St Basil the Great Orthodox Church since then. Isaac and family attended both churches weekly all these years. Isaac and I both have been singing in the church choir. I have also been a member of St John's parish council in 2016-18 and observed Isaac (Church's Treasurer when in St John's) there.

I know Isaac to be a zealous religious person, eager to make himself better through the religious practice. He has been kind and compassionate to others and myself, helping the way he could in difficult situations. He was one of the few who supported me during my marriage breakdown, providing real consolation and advice. As the Parish Treasurer, Isaac has been honest and upright. What I witnessed leaves me in no doubt that he kept the parish finances in proper shape.

I know Isaac and his wife to be very hospitable who regularly invited many parish members to their house on multiple occasions. Over the past few years, they rented a pool for an annual pool party which my children and I thoroughly enjoyed.

I also know Isaac as someone strongly dedicated to his family, with his children being in general well mannered and kind. I consider them good influence to other children including mine.

One thing I can note about Isaac's character is his somewhat quick-tempered sense of justice where his actions are well intended but not always well thought through. As an example, he has been over-protective over my son when a parish member reproached him (for a good reason, I will admit), which led to a conflict that could otherwise be avoided. Again, Isaac was sorry about this and other incidents afterwards and took due course by asking forgiveness of all parties involved. I think he's well aware of this feature of his and applies a lot of personal effort to amend and mitigate it, including via religious practice.

I am not aware of the details of the current proceedings against Isaac. I know that he lost his job and ability to support his family as a result. My understanding is that he decided to abandon the legal field and that he's currently pursuing new career training as software engineer. He communicated to me multiple times that he humbly accepts what happened as deserved by him and he knows that what he did was wrong and he's deeply sorry about his actions since they caused much pain to those involved.

I thus kindly ask the Judge assigned to this process, to consider Isaac's entire life and his general character to make the right decision on the case. I believe this man has already suffered a lot and made proper conclusions. Over the past few months I see him humbled, repentant and ready to accept any judgement as deserved. I hope that the Court's sentence will allow Isaac to continue supporting his wife and five young children and continue pursuing his new career.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information on the matter.

Best regards,

Mikhail Milchenko, Ph.D.

146 Spring Leigh Ct,
Ballwin, MO 63011

cell: 314-210-0283
mmilch01@gmail.com

From:
Giorgi Sakhelashvili, PhD

*Fulbright Research Scholar
352 Quiet Hollow Ln,
House Springs, MO 63051
T: 314-651-8606
E: giorgi@phd-tutor.net*

October 12, 2022

To whom it may concern,

I'm Giorgi Sakhelashvili, Ph.D. Physicist from the country of Georgia. I have known Mr. Isaac Crabtree and his family since 2011 when I arrived in St Louis as Fulbright Research Scholar.

We were neighbors for five years, have been members of the same parish community, and close friends with our families.

There are a lot of positive things I can tell about Mr. Isaac Crabtree: he is a devoted Christian, a head of a pious family with high moral standards, highly educated, a long-term member of the parish council, dedicated choir singer. All these became the reason to elevate him in the status of the tonsured reader by church authorities as one with exemplary devotion and responsibility.

In addition, Isaac has always actively participated in social, charitable, and family-related activities being ready for help and support. He is an excellent father of five children, a caring husband, excellent cook both for family and friends. The latter talent was frequently used by him both to relieve the burden of his spouse and bring excitement and pleasure to people attending charitable dinners at the church hall.

I have to also notice his broad knowledge and understanding of intercultural relations, high respect for others' opinions, and willingness to share people's joy and sorrow. I'm from the very old but little-known country of Georgia and it's hard to describe my surprise when I learned that Isaac knew many things about the history

and culture of the Georgians. He dedicated a lot of effort to learn difficult Georgian polyphonic singing to support his newly acquired friend in nostalgic condition.

Here I have to mention very briefly his countless supports to friends in need and in particular, to my family: with money, food, and other items whenever we needed those most. Also, by offering help with kids - taking them to different activities, field trips, and educational places. And last but not least: offering legal support and advice to us, completely free of charge, which otherwise would cost us a fortune.

To summarize the eleven years of our friendship, which includes our families, I would characterize Isaac as a person with high moral standards, kindness, compassion, supportiveness, and readiness for prompt help. In this picture, the unpleasant episode of his life looks completely fallen out and illogical, some momentary mistake without prerequisites and continuation, one blink of an eye which led to an accident. I've been keeping active relations with him and his family and can confirm that he is a great husband and caring Dad who deeply repents what happened. I see his hard work and efforts to support his family in this very difficult time with an unknown future.

I really hope that this unpleasant episode of his life, which he feels deeply sorry for, will not ruin the life of his 5 beautiful kids and beloved wife and he will have a chance to demonstrate how different he and his life are from that single black spot.

Sincerely,

Giorgi Sakhelashvili, PhD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Sakhelashvili', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mrs. Yelena Loban
354 Quiet Hollow Ln.
House Springs MO 63051
October 15, 2022

To

RE: Character Reference Letter for James Isaac Crabtree

Your Honor,

My name is Yelena Loban. I am the wife of Andrey Loban, independent carpenter from House Springs, MO. We have been residents of House Springs for over 20 years, and have 7 children, some of whom have already finished college and live in different states now. We first met Isaac at St. John Chrysostom Orthodox Church of House Springs about 16 years ago when he and his wife were a newly married couple.

Then and always after they both impressed me as very kind, loyal, studious and self-motivated individuals. Isaac would always be full of ideas and latest information, excited to learn new things and teach others. He has an exceptional memory that makes him an excellent teacher and a storyteller and for that reason he was always chosen to lead the Sunday School, especially for the older children, who are eager for the discussions about faith and church history. Those church meetings meant a lot for both children and parents, and were enjoyed by everyone. We knew Crabtree family before they went to Ohio for Isaac to finish his education. After they came back we also became neighbors and our families grew closer together. Now they were parents and we exchanged babysitting, had potluck meals and worked for our community together. They were always generous in giving of their time (for church projects) and resources (welcoming strangers, sharing meals), cheerful, kind and patriotic. At one point our sons were in BSA together, and Isaac was considering becoming an adult leader, which unfortunately didn't work out because family moved farther away from the city.

Everywhere they went they brought with them their responsibility for helping and involving all people in the community, teaching and providing for all the various needs of it. Isaac has kindly helped us a few times with legal work completely free of charge. I know we were not the only ones he was helping to. He never would act self-important, but rather offer to be of help any time again. I think that his genuine openness and warmth, erudition and practical skills are well known to and served many in St. Louis. I know that Isaac and his family were involved in the Habitat for Humanity, Focus (charitable organization that helps homeless in St. Louis) and other community projects. He and his children occasionally would help serving homeless people dinner at St. Louis FOCUS location.

Isaac and Arlie's children are lucky to have the example of their parents in front of them, but also to have them as mentors who are fully and lovingly involved in their life and education. Such combination of fellowship and mentorship between parents and children is rare in our days, and these children radiate happiness and confidence in each other and their family. I'm a Godmother to his second child, Helen, and Arlie and Isaac are Godparents to our children. Isaac has always been a caring father and a good son to his parents, whom we also know well.

I'm aware of the severe charges that are laid upon Isaac for his disastrous actions and I understand how grievous his misconduct was. I also know that he is full of self-reproach and sorrow over the suffering he has brought to everyone involved. I am asking you, however, to consider his acceptance of his guilt, his previous hard and diligent work, and for his punishment if possible to not include separation from his wife and children, and if it is not possible to avoid their separation to not take away an opportunity for him to support and provide for them, which he is striving to do with all his heart.

Sincerely,
Yelena Loban



Regarding Isaac Crabtree

I am Very Reverend Sergei Alekseev, rector of Saint Basil the Great Orthodox Church (205 Highland Ave., St Louis, MO 63122). I am the dean of the Fifth Deanery (Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Illinois (South)) of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and I serve as a secretary of the Diocesan Spiritual Court.

I have known Isaac Crabtree for eight years, after my family moved to St Louis from Florida and I was appointed an assistant rector at St Basil the Great Orthodox Church. At that time Isaac was a reader at another Orthodox Christian community at House Springs, MO. I got to know Isaac as a very good church reader, church musician and a father of two (at the time) children.

I have always known Isaac as a good family man, taking very seriously the upbringing of his children, educating them at home, trying to shape them as good citizens. I know that the Crabtrees try to do everything as a family. They are open and friendly to the people in their church community. Isaac is a friendly and open person, supportive and very knowledgeable. He is a great asset to the parish.

When I heard that there were allegations against him, it was hard to believe, since I have always known him, as have others, as a solid family man. However, according to the Holy Scripture, *there is no man that sinneth not*. We sin when we allow our passions to overcome us. In such moments, the man betrays his own self, who he truly is, and does things contrary to what he knew to be true his entire life, contrary to what he believes, contrary to the principles he upholds.

All can sin, but not all can repent. Isaac stopped his sinful actions and is regrets them most profoundly. He knows that for a moment of weakness he has to pay a heavy price. His life will never be the same, since the awareness of our sins is always with us. He accepts the full responsibility for what he has done.

Now he is a different man from what he was before. He fully understands that by his actions he hurt his family. His wife was very gracious to forgive him. She has forgiven him, knowing that their life has to have a new start in many ways. He lost his job and, although he is in training to begin working in the sphere which is totally new for him, some career options are probably closed for him indefinitely. Providing for his family is what man has to do, and Isaac is trying to once again be able to fulfill this responsibility.

Many people in our church community are trying to help the Crabtree family. No one turned away from Isaac, knowing how profoundly he repents and seeing how hard he works to undo the harm he has caused to his family.

What Isaac did is a lesson that he will never forget. He is going to be extremely careful when dealing with people, for what he did to his family and to his own life will always be before his eyes.



Very Reverend Sergei Alekseev
1624 Country Hill Ln.
Ballwin, MO 63021

Dear Judge,

Isaac Crabtree asked me to help him during a difficult time by writing a character reference letter. I'm not sure what help, (if any) I can be, but I will plea to you in the same way I have for others.

I first met Isaac Crabtree almost four years ago while I was working as an animal control officer for Jefferson County. I had a case I was getting ready to pursue with a warrant and needed to clear a few things with my boss who was new to her job. I believe this was her first warrant and she had questions she felt the county's attorney would be able to answer. After their conversation, I was told the county attorney, Mr. Crabtree, said things would not work the way I thought with animal bond. I immediately called this "Mr. Crabtree" to tell him he was wrong. He handled the error apologetically and with a great deal of humility.

In the weeks following our first conversation, Isaac and I worked together on my case. I soon saw our political views were more than mildly opposing, and he had been a part of the boy's club that I consider to be the true problem with our country's small-town government. On paper, Isaac was everything I had grown to detest. In reality, Isaac was a kind man with struggles like everyone else.

Isaac and I first bonded over being Southerners in the mid-west. At some point he asked me how I came to be in Missouri. I shared in earnest that I had left my home in the South due to the heartbreak of an affair. This conversation became a pivotal moment which started our friendship. Isaac shared his struggles with being a good husband and father. He shared his religion-which seemed to bring shame to any part of him he felt wasn't worthy. We soon had no secrets. Our conversations were usually centered around moral behavior and how being a flawed human came with human fears and desires. We gave each other compassion and understanding for our human condition.

During the course of our friendship, I have witnessed Isaac grow through selfish desires and the shame they carried. He started therapy on his own months before the FBI's investigation because he wanted to grow into a better human being. I could see his mindset changing in our conversations. Even when a past mistake would pop into his life threatening his career or marriage, he steadied his course towards growth.

Like the rest of us, Isaac is a human that without doubt has selfish moments. While I have witnessed these moments cause his family a great deal of pain, I know Isaac is not a human that purposely causes harm to others. With his flaws, he is a kind and compassionate human being. His soul would not allow him to hold anything over another human for self-gain.

Judge, I believe the case before you has been given to you so that your wisdom will be used to alter a course in Isaac's life. I hope my words have given you some insight to who Isaac is and that you can judge his actions for the mistake of a man and not a vicious predator. I hope you can provide a path that pushes him towards more growth while allowing him to continue to provide for his family.

Thank you for reading my words,

Meghan Harville

Your Honor,

My name is Bryan Alan Kopel, baptized Basil, and I am Isaac Crabtree's godson. I live as a novice monk, Brother Basil, at the All-Merciful Savior Monastery in Vashon, Washington. Up until late April, I had been living in Missouri attending the same church with Isaac Crabtree for over a year.

I first met Isaac at St Basil the Great Orthodox Church last April. He warmly welcomed me as a visitor and eagerly shared his love for God with me. His friendly and genuine disposition were always a blessing to me and others at church, and when it came time for me to select a Godfather to help me through baptism, he was the undisputed first choice. I later came to find that he has been the Godfather for several people before me, as well, confirming his reputation as a joyful, helpful, patient, and kindhearted father. His entire family was a joy to the community, and I have never witnessed a more patient father.

Not only could he work a difficult full time job and raise five children with affection who also demonstrate his kindness, inquisitive joy, and industrious ethic, ever with the youngest being a tumultuous toddler, but he was active in my own instruction in the faith. The fact that I am a novice monk within a year of my baptism is partly a testament to the quality instruction he provided in both his counsel and character.

When I related my decision to have Isaac Crabtree as my Godfather to my catechism teacher and Deacon, Thomas Nichols, he immediately agreed that he would make an excellent choice. Everyone at church had positive things to say about him, and he would regularly help in the choir, bring food, clean, welcome in strangers, introduce people to one another, and never withdrew from responsibility.

Isaac Crabtree has never denied responsibility for his sins to my knowledge, either in this case or generally. In fact, he has not once engaged in self pity or justification in our interactions, but expressed heartfelt remorse and requested prayers for mercy on him and his family.

Please do not remove him from his family, where he has been a faithful husband, father, and friend. Have mercy on him in recognition that our community is made of few people of such character, and we would all be worse off without him. I pray and beg your fairness in judging him in his entirety, and not merely on one sin.

Isaac Crabtree is the patriarch of his family, and I ask once again for mercy, not only for his sake, but for theirs. His wife, five young children, and extended family are all counting on him to provide for them spiritually, financially, and emotionally. Please allow him to continue with training, employment, and providing these essential needs for them. No one is best served by their devastation.

Isaac is certainly committed to righting the wrongs of his past without the need for incarceration or harsh penalties. He is not a grave threat to society. He is one of the most conscientious men I have ever had the honor to befriend. I know that a fair accounting of the situation demonstrates, along with his subsequent admission of guilt and heartfelt remorse, that the lightest sentencing possible would be the best outcome for all of us going forward.

Respectfully,
Bryan Alan Kopel (Brother Basil)

The Schnaare Law Firm, P C

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October 12, 2022

Honorable Ronnie L. White
United States Federal District Judge
Thomas Eagleton Courthouse
111 South 10th Street
St. Louis, MO 63102

Reference: US v Crabtree No. 4:22-CR-219 SRC

Dear Judge White,

I have practiced law in Jefferson County, Missouri for 43 years. I am deeply rooted here in Hillsboro and live in the house in which I grew up, about 2 miles from town. Twice, former governors have appointed me to positions of Associate Circuit Judge and then to the Circuit Court as Probate Judge. I am a former president of Rotary and member of the Masonic Lodge and other civic groups as well as a serving member of Hillsboro Christian Church. During that time, I have become a friend of Isaac Crabtree who now presents himself for your measure of justice in his case.

I first met Isaac while he was acting as prosecutor for municipal violations for Jefferson County, but really got to know him well when we were on the Jefferson County Board of Habitat for Humanity as co-directors. During that time, I also was lucky enough to meet his wonderful wife and several children. We also worked closely on a pro bono case which he referred involving an elderly woman who had a desire to create a cemetery on her land to inter herself and her husband. My personal connection with Isaac spans several years.

In my opinion he had many good character traits. I would consider him honest, forthright, committed to service to others, and a person of general good report. He is a devout Greek Orthodox Christian, which I know because we often had religious discussion. He is empathetic and kind to those in need. Irrespective of this current matter, I know him to be a man of principles and was personally sad for him when the news of his misjudgment was made public.

I would hire him if the opportunity arose, even with this blemish on his career, because I sincerely believe that his moment of passion is not the true color of his life nor measure of his qualities. He is a good man with much to offer by way of service to the public, his family and

clients. Reflecting on my own youth there were certainly times when passion was at war with good sense and fortunately, I was able to chose rightly not wrongly, yet the temptation was great.

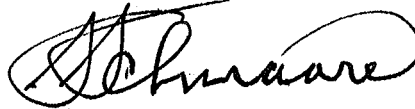
It is my opinion also that his fellow employees, the public generally and those who knew him privately and publicly would say many of the things I am mentioning. Honestly the news of this dalliance shocked us as being so out of his true character.

I spoke with Isaac after these matters became public. He expressed to me his deep sorrow at having disappointed me and let his friends and family down. Any formal punishment you might issue will not rise to the self-inflicted pain on his heart and soul he bears now for having let this foolish choice rule his life.

I most sincerely and strongly recommend that Isaac be granted mercy by this court. His future has good things remaining. He can do wonderful things if this incident does not become the headnote of his life, but rather a footnote from which he will grow in wisdom and impart that same wisdom to others.

Isaac is truly a decent man whose best qualities were temporarily blinded by moments of passion. Thank you for receiving my comments.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Schnaare", with a large, stylized initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Stanley D. Schnaare

Dear Judge Clark:

I consider this to be the single most important letter that I've ever written. Why? Because I am writing on behalf of my best friend, J. Isaac Crabtree, whose steadfast and faithful love and support have always been there during my darkest hours. Not only am I writing on his behalf, but I am also writing on behalf of his wife (and my friend) Arlie and the five children they have together—
—the last of which joined the family only a few months ago.

My name is Joshua David Wiseman, and I am a member of the West Virginia Bar (Bar No. 13750). Although I am 42 years old, I have only been licensed to practice law since 2019, given that I was a nontraditional student and went to law school after having spent a decade in banking. I graduated third in my class; was an Associate Editor on Volume 118 of the *West Virginia Law Review*; and earned eleven CALI awards. After law school, I worked at Thomas Combs & Spann, PLLC (a civil defense firm located in Charleston, West Virginia) for two-and-a-half years before “switching teams” and joining a smaller plaintiff’s firm, New, Taylor & Associates, from which I recently resigned in order to pursue working for the State of West Virginia.

I humbly ask for your indulgence if I share too much below. This letter is so important to me that it’s hard for me to write anything at all. I feel like I’m back in law school working on my first grade-determining brief or memorandum, staring for centuries and millennia at a blinking cursor in a blank word document, unable to type anything because of the palpable gravitas of the moment. I have given considerable thought to whether or not to use lawyerly brevity—well aware that for a judge, time is a *very* scarce resource—or to write “normally” and naturally. On the one hand, I run the risk of providing too much information and/or appearing that I neither value your time, nor understand how a letter like this should be written. On the other hand, context is everything: and without providing some background information, context, and detail, I fear this letter would come across as a stale, lifeless blurb, stripped of all warmth and humanity: “I like this person and he has helped me.” Like Jacob at the ford of Jabbok, I have wrestled and wrestled with writing this letter, not knowing how to approach it—but now Father Time has touched my hip socket, and necessity now forces me to limp forward and approach it the best way I know how. I apologize in advance for the length of this letter, and I will deeply and eternally appreciate it if you take the time to read it.

I first met Isaac in 2000 or 2001, when he was known as “Zac.” Our respective churches had taken their young-adult groups to an event at Mount Vernon Nazarene College (now “University”). Zac and I stumbled upon one another at the event, and before we knew it, we were off to the side talking about the textual traditions underlying the Johannine Comma and the Christological implications of Zechariah 12:10 while everyone else spent the evening playing volleyball, flirting, and eating pizza. We instantly took to one another because we had a common *raison d’être*, namely, knowing God via studying the Scriptures.

Roughly five years or so into our friendship, our lives began to take radically different trajectories. Zac had married, gone to law school, and begun practicing, and it wasn’t long after that before he had started a family. I had earned a bachelor’s degree in religious studies and had graduated with plans of going to seminary. However, my choices during that time period kicked off a swiftly

metastasizing alcoholism that was to devour the next decade of my life. Zac was ascending, and I was descending. However, throughout all of that time, as things continued to grow darker and more hopeless, Zac always kept in touch with me and would always offer encouragement and hope.

As my drinking approached its Hellmouth nadir, I decided to go to law school. In 2015, at the start of my 2L year, I began to seek help in earnest. Without having gotten into any trouble and prior to facing any externally imposed consequences, I confessed my inability to stop drinking to the elders at my church and began seeing a therapist with the express purpose of getting sober. Again, Zac always reached out to encourage and check on me.

In fact, Zac is the one who first introduced me to *Alcoholics Anonymous*, i.e., “the Big Book” (AA’s primary text). Zac was very conversant with the Big Book because by 2015 (at the earliest), he had begun attending Sexaholics Anonymous (“SA”), which is a 12-step fellowship designed to combat addiction to lust, and SA often utilizes the Big Book. Granted, I have only a layperson’s grasp of science, but my lay understanding of neurochemistry is that addiction to lust is every bit as real as addiction to alcohol or opioids, insofar as it shares the same or similar neurotransmitters and neural pathways. Every rehabilitation center or professional assistance program (e.g., for physicians, lawyers, etc.) of which I am aware treats addiction to lust as a legitimate, bona fide addiction. Odds are there are exceptions, but if so, I’ve not yet encountered them.

For various reasons, I didn’t listen to my elders’ advice to withdraw from law school and seek treatment for alcoholism, nor did I listen to Zac’s and my therapist’s advice to become involved in AA. Said refusal bore predictable fruit. In September of 2016, at the start of my 3L year, I found myself laying on my couch and trembling in withdrawals after a days-long, blackout-filled bender. Not only was I trembling, but I was also in abject fear and hopelessness. The Office of Student Conduct (“OSC”) had reached out and informed me that complaints had been made against me for things I did during my bender and that I was required to report to the OSC’s office and speak to an OSC investigator. I had only a handful of broken memories from the previous few days, but the gravitas of the OSC’s communication had created a crushing sense of impending doom.

And in that shivering hopelessness, with that sword of Damocles ponderously hanging over my head, whom did I call? Zac. I told him that I had hit rock bottom. And I’ll never forget what he said. “Well, you may have hit rock bottom, but that Rock is Christ, who has promised to never leave us, nor forsake us.” And he encouraged me and told me that God would see me through whatever awaited me. His voice was palpably full of a warm and steadfast ἀγάπη. For as long as I live, I will never forget that lone-ray-of-light telephone call.

I ended up withdrawing from law school and signing a contract with the West Virginia Lawyers Assistance Program (now “West Virginia Judicial and Lawyers Assistance Program”) (hereinafter, “WVJLAP”), which arranged for me to go to a top-notch treatment center. For the next year, I worked as a teller at a local bank and threw myself wholeheartedly into AA while waiting to hear whether or not I would be allowed to return to law school.

I was graciously given a second chance, and I’ve remained completely sober ever since.

I believe that Zac should be given a second chance as well.

My general understanding of this situation is that, in light of the sentencing guidelines and the plea agreement, this Honorable Court possesses the discretion to impose a sentence that does not result in bodily confinement. For the following reasons, I believe that a sentence that allows Zac to maintain full and uninterrupted bodily liberty fairly and justly balances the interests of everyone involved—the victim, the government, the bar, society, Zac, his wife, and their five children.

First, my experience—and, I believe, common sense and the relevant professional literature—demonstrate that deep and permanent reform, rehabilitation, and recovery are best achieved by a combination of consequences and hope: consequences stiff and sharp enough to change a person's course, but not so severe that a person gives up hope and falls into despair. One sees evidence of this very basic understanding even in first century texts—for example, a first-century tentmaker from Tarsus once instructed a church in Corinth to forgive and comfort a man who had been disciplined for sin, “lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.” 2 *Corinthians* 2:7 (King James).

I fear that the government will argue that Zac must undergo a period of incarceration to serve the interests of justice, both to punish him for his actions and to demonstrate to the public that the law applies equally to all citizens—i.e., that prosecutors are not given special treatment or handled with proverbial kid gloves.

In preemptive response, I would like to point out that my friend and de facto brother has already had his life systematically dismantled and virtually destroyed. Zac had invested years into his career with the county—and that career has now been permanently and irrevocably buried. Moreover, the fact that Zac's actions directly caused the collapse of his career has been widely publicized in both national and local media. People all across the country—as well as people in Zac's family, church, and neighborhood—know the lurid outline of what took place. The internet, as we all well know, is forever, and punching Zac's name into a search engine will likely always, world without end, result in front-page displays of these stories.

Zac's marriage and family have also been impacted. He has had to confess to and ask forgiveness from Arlie, enduring days and weeks of worrying about whether she would leave him. I remember speaking with Zac shortly after he told her. I could hear him packing up his things because Arlie understandably wanted space. I remember hearing two children—I believe it was [redacted] and [redacted], but I'm not certain—crying and tearfully asking daddy where he was going. Zac told them that daddy was going on a camping trip and that everything was okay—and even half a country away, it was clear from their responses that the children *knew* that daddy wasn't just going “on a camping trip” and that everything was *not*, in fact, “okay.” They knew that something was very, very wrong. Hearing that exchange was utterly heart-breaking.

I have watched Zac be swallowed by shame. To the best of my knowledge, I was the first friend whom Zac told about this situation and its looming consequences. Again, to the best of my recollection, it seemed that at least a month (and maybe two) passed before he told most or all of his other close friends—even people whom he had known for decades. I listened to him wrestle with whether or not he could even face the shame of returning to his local church.

Not only is Zac no longer working for the county—he's no longer even practicing law. I have watched him throw himself with incredible passion and determination into learning some form of computer-related coding so that he can carve out a new career for himself and continue to provide for his wife and children. Speaking of providing for his family, this process has caused Zac's finances to be drawn and quartered, and Arlie, who had previously devoted her efforts exclusively to managing the household and homeschooling their children, has had to take a job at Starbucks in order to bring in extra income.

Zac has already faced *severe* consequences for his sin and crime: his fruit has been stripped; his leaves have withered; and his bark has been peeled. Does the government believe that the punitive ends of justice will not be served unless this half-dead tree is now hewn down and cast into the fire? *Ecce homo*. Zac has borne such consequences already. If the government stands before this Honorable Court and states, "Isaac J. Crabtree *delenda est*," then I ask this Court to see that the Carthage of Zac's life has already been sacked, burned, and razed to the ground—does justice really require that Zac's fields now be sown with salt?

Second, Zac sought help for his addiction to lust as early as 2015 (and probably earlier, but you would need to ask him about that), when he began participating in Sexaholics Anonymous. During that time, he was also seeking help from his Orthodox spiritual father. Surely that should count for something. Zac tried to address his problems years before any external consequences were imposed. The awareness and repentance that Zac is now demonstrating is not mere consequence-avoiding mummery and hypocrisy. Now, Zac has experienced life-altering, *sui generis* consequences from God and the State, and the seedling of attempted change has been transformed into an oak of resolute and permanent repentance that will continue to yield good fruit. *Zac knows* that he has been brought down by his own sin: he has confessed his wrongdoing to the government, to this Court, to his wife, and to his God. He has taken full and complete responsibility for his actions.

Third, the victim would not be wronged by a sentence that allowed Zac to maintain his liberty. A man used his position and power to wrong her, and that man has now been forever stripped of said position and power, and all of the aforesaid negative consequences have been brought to bear on him. Moreover, she has also had the opportunity to see the government mobilize to protect her interests and bring her justice: and this has hopefully restored at least some of her confidence in the integrity of our government and judicial system. And for *her* benefit and peace of mind—I think it's crystal clear that Zac would never, under any circumstances, try to contact her—could the Court not fashion some permanent injunction or no-contact order mandating that Zac never attempt to contact her?

Fourth, could this Court not craft a sentence that orders Zac to participate in therapy and 12-step programs designed to treat addiction to lust? My understanding is that Zac has already signed a contract with the Missouri Lawyers' Assistance Program ("MOLAP"), and I know that he still actively keeps in touch with his Orthodox spiritual father concerning his addiction. I believe that he would enthusiastically embrace any protocol of treatment that this Court orders.

Finally, a sentence that does not impose incarceration is in the best interests of Zac's family. No man is perfect, and Zac's glaring failure does not detract from the fact that, in almost every other

respect, he is an amazing father. Should the welfare and best interests of J not be considered by this Court? Surely, many men who are sentenced to prison have children—but how many of them are *fathers*? How many men have made tremendous sacrifices to homeschool their children? There are ten thousand wonderful things that Zac has done for his children. Oddly, the first thing that always comes to mind is that Zac and Arlie have created “theme songs” for the four oldest children—I believe _____ is yet to be composed—containing lyrics and melodies unique to each child. And I have heard the children burst into laughter and happiness as the songs are playfully sung to them. Must Zac be taken from the lives of these five precious souls? Must Arlie, who was pregnant with their fifth child when Zac confessed his sin to her, and who has had to begin working at Starbucks to make ends meet, now see the husband with whom she has chosen to remain taken from her and thrown behind bars? Must that extra source of income be taken from her life? Must her strain be increased from “severe” to “nervous-breakdown inducing” in order for justice to be served? Will this Court not exercise its discretion to end this waking nightmare in which she has found herself?

A certain Carpenter once asked a group of religious leaders, “Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?” *Mark* 3:2–6 (King James). Likewise, I would ask this Court, “Is it not appropriate for this Court to use its discretion to do good? To save a family, and not to destroy it?”

I humbly ask this Honorable Court to impose a sentence that will allow Zac to maintain his bodily liberty, such that he is able to continue laying the foundation for a new life, both for him and for his family.

Sincerely,

/s/Joshua David Wiseman
Joshua D. Wiseman, Esq.
WV State Bar No. 13750